

*Q: Hi Arthur! Thanks for your wonderful books, I truly enjoy them. I wonder how long should be a daily session dedicated to solve exercises and have you any recommendation on how to read an opening book efficiently.*

A: How long a daily session should take: It is quite individual, but probably you need to have longer sessions when you study positional themes. In my books you can use the stars to gage how long. But 1-2 hours seems to be average for the tests in my books. Regarding openings books: Difficult to say, because there are different types of books. Personally I like the ones with a lot of explanation, but they can be hard to find. Regarding the repertoire books, we simply read it as a normal book. My recommendation is to use a chess board and sometimes even two (one for main lines and one for sidelines). Some people put things into the computer while reading, which also makes a lot of sense.

*Q: Let me first point out that I had the pleasure to meet Artur in person in Illertissen some years ago and still remember the enjoyable anecdotes about his career he provided to the participants of the state championship. I'm a player with a rating of around 2000 DWZ / ELO, i.e. a level Artur may have surpassed at the age of 6 :-). Currently I'm working my way through the whole series of Artur's books. One of the things that strike me is that this improvement series treats the opening phase on a very fundamental level. I would like to ask Artur if he thinks that players below 2100 just shouldn't care much about opening theory and focus on developing other key skills like analysis and positional understanding instead. Or to put it differently, from what playing strength on should a player start to care about opening theory in his training?*

A: Haha. I was not so strong back then. It is a very important question you have there! Obviously there is a big discussion between chess trainers about this. A good moment to start look at the opening might be the place where you stop blundering things. The idea is: if you blunder, the quality of your position out of the opening is less important. If you are not there yet, you need to first learn to stop blundering things, in order for you to be able to profit from your opening work. But of course this is very general and just one opinion. For some people, this might be the wrong advice, but this is the nature of general advice, it does not suit everybody.

*Q: Dear GM Yusupov: When will we see a "My best Games " Book from you ?*

A: A nice question! Actually I think there are so many of my best games in the nine volume series that I have to produce a lot of new great games before it becomes relevant! At the moment I enjoy being a reader more than a writer, but who knows what will happen in the future.

*Q: Hello Artur! A question of clarification on your training series. Everyone I know seems to be confused about the order in which you should read the books. Is it Build up your chess 1,2 and 3 followed by Boost your Chess 1,2 and 3 and so on or is it Build 1, Boost 1 and Chess Evolution 1 – that is the fundamentals series – followed by Build 2 and so on... A question of level or complexity if you will. Everyone I know (including me) seems to think that The Fundamentals series (orange) is for players up to 1800, not 1500 – Beyond the Basics (blue) for up to 2100, not 1800 and if you master the material in the Mastery-series (green) you would be around 2300 in playing strength, not 2100. Is this something you agree or disagree with and why? I am around 2000-rated but still find many positions in the Fundamentals series very challenging. Also, I don't just read your books, I sell them too so this is very useful to know. I have all nine books and have had a thought on how I want to read them. Maybe choose 1 topic at a time, for instance tactics and read all the tactics chapters in order from book 1 to 9. Then go back, pick a new topic and go through all those chapters in order and then again... Is this a clever way or a stupid way to read your series, in your opinion? Thank you for writing the books!*

A: About the order: Orange, blue, green. See here:

[http://www.qualitychess.co.uk/docs/14/artur\\_yusupovs\\_awardwinning\\_training\\_course/](http://www.qualitychess.co.uk/docs/14/artur_yusupovs_awardwinning_training_course/) about the level of the difficulty. This was quite hard to evaluate and some of the material shoots over the target of 1500 etc. I do not think it is a bad thing that some of the material is “too hard”, because we also learn a lot from positions where we cannot see everything. Also, there is a weakness from the author. The rating and the points are actually irrelevant; a point of entertainment. The main idea is to go through the material and learn from it. We need to learn from the examples; even if they are a bit too difficult. Also, I probably got the estimate a bit wrong, but at least I tried. My task was to give the fundamental material, leaving it up to the reader to get the most out of it. If some of it is not suitable for the individual, I do not think much is lost. The books have enough useful stuff for anyone to learn something.

*Q: Hi Arthur, some question about general improvement: How should you analyze your own games? Thanks in advance!*

A: A very important question: The answer you can find in the Dvoretsky/Yusupov books Vol. 1 (secrets of chess training 1). There is a full chapter on this question in it. Here I want to say that analysing your games is a major way to improve your play.

1. First of all write down everything you thought happened during the game right after it.
2. It is difficult, but very desirable to try to analyse it (maybe with your opponent) yourself without a computer.
3. Only after you have finished those analyses you can turn on the computer.

In this way we can work on solving problems, finding candidate moves, analyse positions and so on. Basically, the idea is to use the game as training material. Unfortunately most people do not do this work these days; they simply turn on the computer, get a solution and learn nothing from the process. We did not give ourselves the chance to find the move after the game either! The concrete knowledge given by the computer is worth less than the training in finding the good move ourselves.

*Q: Hi Arthur, which is in your opinion the biggest difference in the play between master level (about 2300) and grandmaster level (2500 and above)? Opening preparation? Tactic? Endgame? Thanks in advance.*

A: There is a difference in all of these areas and especially positional play and correct evaluation of the position. At least this is what I wrote in the foreword for Jacob's book Positional Play.

*Q: Do you have any advice on time management? How do you train your students to avoid time trouble?*

A: No short answer to this. The best method is probably to hit the student with a stick if he gets into time trouble! Usually there are many reasons for time trouble. So the solutions are individual. Maybe it is like a man spending 450 euro from his 500 euro monthly living allowance. Simply stupid behaviour. If so, understanding this might be a solution in itself. But usually, the first prescription would be to write down your time spent on each move and then find out where the time is lost. One of the things we need to accept is that we cannot solve all problems entirely satisfactorily. People who end in time trouble generally have a problem making decisions and try to look for certainty. A 2300 player cannot solve something Gelfand needs 45 minutes to solve! We need to accept this and be practical.

*Q: Hello Arthur, in your books you insist strongly on doing the exercises with a real chess set rather than from the diagrams in the book. I have to admit that for most chapters I did the exercises from the*

*diagrams; only the chapter on topics with a less forcing character (mainly on strategic play and positional play) I did with a real chess set. We have had some debate on this blog about this issue and Jacob seemed to be of the opinion that it may differ per person. What is your opinion on this? Why is using a real chess set so important to you, and what do you lose if you work from the diagrams? Even when working from the diagrams, I still have the feeling that your books are very useful. I have a FIDE rating of 2220 and still I found quite some challenges and learned quite a lot :- ) (I'm currently at the end of book 7 :- ) ). Thanks in advance!*

A: First of all: this advice is very important for children; they have greater problems switching between two and three dimensional thinking. Remember, we play in 3D. But this is not a religious thing; but a general advice (which does not automatic work for everyone).

*Q: Hi Artur, thank you for your books, I enjoy them a lot and find them the most useful chess books I ever read. I started two years ago, when I picked up chess again after a long break. Currently I'm in the middle of book 5. The thing that interests me is how to spend my training time right. Let's say I have roughly 25 hours per month that I can spend on training if I'm disciplined enough. Currently I spend roughly half of the time with your books and the other half with analysing my own games. Do you think that makes sense? Or should I pay more attention e.g. to playing through annotated games or whatever? And how many real OTB games should I play on a yearly basis? Currently I try to play 50 per year, more is difficult with two young daughters and a full time job and a wife who isn't too excited about all that chess stuff ... ;- ) Thanks in advance!*

A: Yes, this makes excellent sense, but again it is very individual :- ) . Maybe sometimes you also need to address a specific area of your game (calculation, endgame, openings...). You should remain flexible. Regarding the number games a year: whatever feels good for you. It is important to play and to analyse the games. Do not play more than you can analyse! If you play 100 games and only analyse 20, then 80 games are "wasted". Botvinnik recommended 60 games a year, so you are in good company.

*Q: Hello Mr Yusupov, I am currently an amateur (USCF rating 1500). I have been playing chess now for 20 years. I have not been serious about learning until just over a year ago. I just recently started reading your books and am really enjoying them so far. I am much older than most of the people at my level (50) and understand someone at my level needs to focus on the middle game and end game study which I am trying to do. My questions though resolve around an opening repertoire:*

- 1. Should someone of my age and level be playing the same opening again and again or does it really matter and playing Queen Pawn in one game and King pawn in another to get a feel for many different positions is ok?*
- 2. I typically go from one opening to another depending on how I feel at the moment. Currently I have been playing the English opening for about 5 months now. My reasons seem simple enough. Since I am older, my mind can't keep up with all the theory in the main lines of the Ruy Lopez, Sicilian, KID, etc. The young chess players I play against are just more capable at memorizing 20 moves of theory deep. I just can't do that anymore. With the English I feel like we are playing Chess ideas and not moves we have memorized. I also enjoy positional Chess more than trying to calculate many variations in a wild tactical melee (not that calculation isn't important). Many times I have been told the English is not for amateurs and I should be playing a King pawn opening with all the other people at my level. I suppose there may be some truth to that. Am I really hurting my chess development by playing the English opening?*
- 3. Should a player at my level even have an opening repertoire?*

A: Why not have a repertoire? And the English is certainly a decent opening, good enough for Carlsen, Kramnik and so on, so why not for you? For children I recommend starting with 1.e4 to make the game more tactical, but otherwise I would recommend you to stay with an opening you like and not care about what other people think! It is important to enjoy chess and to get positions we enjoy playing, more than maybe getting an advantage. And yes, stay out of the concrete opening theory for now.

*Q: Hello Artur, First thanks for your wonderful series of training books. I have a question about the middlegame and planning, this seems to be one of the hardest things to teach and learn...I think it is the first or second blue book you have a chapter on Planning...You give examples of a masters plan vs. amateur (basically no plan) then you give 8 things to look at in a given position, like pawn structure, piece placement etc. What I am learning from your books and from Jacob's Grandmaster Prep series is that after training in this area you will not need to ask yourself so many questions about the position because simpler moves start to appear just from recognition. But until we get to that stronger playing strength is there anything else we should ask ourselves in a particular order while trying to find candidate moves? For example, Threats, weakness, etc. Is anyone order more efficient for time sake in a real game? Thanks!!*

A: From a practical point of view; we should probably try to understand what the opponent's intention is first of all. Sometimes this directs us straight to the "answer". Secondly; it is quite important to focus on the changes in the position, which squares are now weakened and so on. Maybe extra opportunities have arisen? It is a tough question: Jacob wrote a whole book on this and I have to get on to the next question :-)

*Q: Dear Artur, I have your series of books and many other chess books. In some of them they say the path to a grand master is well known. The problem is they never explain the path. If we start out at chess master what training is needed after this to become a grand master.. I understand ,assuming you have the ability, it would take about 3 more years.*

A: To become a grandmaster is very difficult and can take quite a long time! Referring to my nine books: they are simply the beginning of the journey. To go beyond this, you need to look at Jacob Aagaard's books, Mark Dvoretsky's books and solve many exercises, analyse your games, study classic games, modern games, have an opening repertoire and so on. Basically, it is hard work, but at least a lot of good material exists. My books are intending to build a foundation for a grandmaster, but much more work is needed. It takes a lot more than just reading books to become a grandmaster I am afraid.

*Q: Hello GM Yusupov, To start with, my deepest thanks to you for your awesome contribution to the chess community with your books! The question I would like to ask you: How should you analyze your own games? I would like to request: could you please give some guidelines in this regard for someone who has no access to a chess coach? You have written before that during analysis of one's own games we should try to find the critical moments. Could you give some advice how an amateur player/analyst can find these critical moments? Once again, thanks a million in advance!*

A: A few guidelines. First of all, look at the Dvoretsky book I already mentioned. It covers this quite well. About critical moments: In my opinion this is an individual thing. Because what is critical for Carlsen is maybe irrelevant for us! And what is trivial for him, is maybe critical for us! There are some indications about critical moments; the appearance of forcing continuations that can be calculated. Or moments with a choice that would really change the character of the game. Or if the opponent did something unexpected. But these are simply indications. Often mistakes are made in difficult/critical

moments, but this is retrospective analysis and maybe not useful during the game. The theme is very complex and again some people have written books with this theme as the title, so my answer is clearly insufficient, but hopefully useful all the same.

*Q: I would like to ask can one and if so how does one use today's strong computer engines to help one's chess training. (I am about 2100 by the way).*

A: The computers are very helpful in opening preparation; but we should not forget that top players start with their own ideas and not those of the computer when they prepare. Regarding analysing your own games, see above. When you look at games online, please turn off the engine functions. Compare your ideas with what happens in the games and only after the games check with the computers. The general recommendation is to turn on your own head before you turn on the computer. It is a very powerful tool that can do as much harm as good.

*Q: Hello Arthur! +1 for question "When will we see a "My best Games " book from you ?" My question: Should a player of strength about 2000-2100 FIDE ELO (and like to improve) when building/considering opening repertoire concentrate rather on main openings/lines (like Sicilian or closed Ruy Lopez as black on 1. e4, etc.) or it is possible to play correct but definitely side opening/lines like Chigorin or Albin counter gambit on 1.d4 resp. rather rare line in French on 1.e4? It is a must to know well-known openings (well-known positions from openings) like Sicilian or Ruy Lopez to improve? What is your opinion – should one invest time to study main lines or it is a no problem to stick with side-lines?*

A: Again very flattered. Another difficult question. And again the answer is to some extent individual. Like: how good is your memory, for example. The main criterion is to get positions you can play and understand and then to learn typical plans and so on. We should find positions that suit our style and care less about main and side-lines.

*Q: Hello Artur, I would like to ask on a method of training to improve time management during a game. I'm 2101 FIDE-rated, and my very big weakness is spending huge amounts of time right after the opening, when I get "out of book"... I spend maybe 7-10 (sometimes more like 15) minutes on every move, and I regularly get into time trouble at around move 20-25 (talking about the standard FIDE tempo 90 minutes/40 moves +30 minutes, with 30 sec bonus) and although I usually get good positions by that time, many times I throw half-points (or more) out of the window during time trouble. I play the same openings all the time ("Tiviakov type" per Jacob :-), but still get into TT at around move 25.. and even sooner with unusual openings, as I do none to very little opening study overall and primarily focus on tactics and your books now :-). I know that Botvinnik said to utilize training games for this (although I feel that something else is needed in my case, too) – do you think it's a good idea to play such games against an engine? I don't have easy access to a training partner, hence the question... Thanks very much for taking the time for my question, and thank you for the outstanding training material!*

A: Playing the same openings all the time is not in itself a bad thing. Maybe it would help to "follow the leader" and study some of the annotated games you can get your hands on. For example: Tiviakov annotates his games very well; explains the ideas and so on. It can help us to understand the nature of the opening and the typical plans for the middlegame, which can help us make the decisions right out of the opening better. But we cannot get around the need to make decisions. It is a matter of discipline, as mentioned earlier. Sorry, no simple solutions for this illness.

*Q: Thank you Artur for having written these wonderful books! I love them and I have bought them all! (I'm currently working in book 2, learning about traps :) And I try to buy all your book-recommendations as well, however some of them seem to be out of print\**

- *“Traps on the chessboard”. “How to play the chess openings” by Znosko-Borovsky is available though, should one get that instead? Or do you have another alternative?*
- *“The Art of Combinations”. Do you have an alternative or is it enough with “Combinative motifs”? Are they similar?*
- *“Practical endgame tips”. Alternative?*
- *You didn't recommend “Secrets of chess training” or “Secrets of creative thinking” of the “Secrets”-series, I'm just curious why?*
- *What do you recommend your readers to play against the Caro-Kan?*
- *Do you have a second recommendation what to play after 1.e4 ...e5 for white?*
- *Would you recommend Sveshnikov's books on the French advance variation?*
- *If there were some final words at the end in the last book, what would you say then?*
- *Are you working on any new books? Will there be some sort of continuation of the Fundamentals/Beyond the Basics/Mastery-series?*

*Thank you!*

*\*(to Quality Chess): or are written in descriptive notation, Capablanca, Tarrasch, Euwe etc. Couldn't Quality Chess publish some of these books? :) Many Yusupov-readers who try to follow Artur's advice should be interested in buying them.*

*A: Yes, maybe I have to think about updating my recommendations! Some of those books are reappearing, like for example Lipnitsky's book, which I do not think I recommended, because it had been out of print since 1956. My selection was by no means perfect; books can be excellent even if not on the list! Regarding the opening questions; this is maybe too much and too individual to give good answers. Also, Jacob told me to stay within the theme of general chess improvement. Also, due to bad time management I am now in time trouble and soon my wife will call me to dinner.*

*Q: Hi Artur, I am largely self-taught. I have been playing for 12 years and currently have a FIDE elo of about 2330 (1 IM norm) and a USCF rating of about 2400. I have studied openings, middlegames and endgames and have gone through your series with Dvoretsky. The idea was to eliminate as many weaknesses in my own game as possible. I believe I have done a good job in this, although I'm clearly not Grandmaster level yet. Recently I took IM Igor Khmel'nitsky's book “Chess Exam” and noticed that no one single weakness stood out (all my results were largely around the 2300 level except for “Standard Positions” which was almost 2500). That leads me to my main question: If one is self-taught and has no obvious big weaknesses, what's the next step towards improvement? Try even harder to locate weaknesses? Work on the areas of the game that one finds interesting on a particular day? Something else? I realize the wisdom of finding a good chess coach but norm tournaments in the USA are not cheap. Thank you for your time and consideration.*

*A: The main point I can make here is that although working on your weaknesses is very effective, we should not forget to develop our strengths either! And interesting method could be to look at the great players you like and try to develop your strengths in that direction: like Tal, Karpov, Petrosian, Korchnoi or some entirely different character again. Also, this can help us to develop our opening repertoire as well. As before, the recommendation could be many, but “follow the leader” is not at all a bad strategy.*

*Q: Dear Artur, I ask you this as a fan of your play in the French defence. Is the Winawer variation 7.Qg4 Kf8 still alive? An argument could be made that a weak amateur like myself has no right to be interested in such things, but this line is a hobby-horse of mine, and I have drawn the occasional IM with it in 15-minute. I have noticed that you have played a game or two in the “neighbourhood” (e.g. one with 7.h4 h6!?!—it seemed to me that on 8.Qg4, maybe you intended 8. . .Kf8).*

A: I never played this line. To me it always looked suspicious. But you can play anything if it gives you good result. It is not a refuted line.

*Q: I would like to ask if Artur Yusupov would suggest different training for older players 40 plus trying to maintain their strength from that for younger improving players.*

A: I have actually no opinion on this; I have not thought enough about it. It is extremely important to have a trainer you get along with. With age this gives us a chance to use our experience to choose better trainers and tournaments. But young people learn faster; after 40 I would not try to learn a lot of theory. Maybe it is better to build a different repertoire then. The question is once again better than the answer!

*Q: Hi Arthur. I would like to hear your thoughts on following statements:*

- 1. Korchnoi once said that “When a player decides to change his openings, it’s a sign that he’s growing up”. Do you agree on this and how big changes do you think is needed to improve (only variations or totally new systems like switching from 1.d4 to 1.e4).*
- 2. Botvinnik said “A master’s strength is in the evaluation of a position”. Do you have any general suggestions for an effective way to improve the evaluation skill?*

Thanks.

A:

1. It probably was not something he meant as a universal truth. It can mean a lot of thing. My usual recommendation is to use your repertoire if you have spent time building it up and not just throw it away.
2. One idea is to read good books with good explanations. Particularly the games of the great players with their own comments. They evaluated the positions better than us.

*Q: Hello Mr Yusupov! First of all, I’m truly inspired by some of your games, as well as books and training ideas. Even if I don’t apply them, they’re always thought-provoking. Now to the issue :) , I’m a 17-year old 2250-player and I have not improved at all the last 1½ years. I do however sometimes notice that when I’m travelling/analyzing with a strong player, my level of play immediately increases. This summer during the national junior competition we had a 2550 GM friend living with us and he helped us analyze and sometimes to prepare. I performed about 2450 in that tournament. So, my thought is that (at least for me), the problem is not lack of knowledge, but there’s just some “feeling” for the game of chess that sometimes is there, and sometimes it’s not. Is this completely off track, and do you have any advice on how to get this “2400-feeling” on a more regular basis? Sometimes I can feel that feeling while simply playing through games of high rated players, and I’m also a big fan of the “young” Magnus Carlsen, until he was about 14.*

A: An interesting situation. As a young player I profited a lot of analysing with older players and I later shared with younger players as well. This was quite typical of the Soviet chess school. I think it is

quite useful to look for these opportunities and get to analyse with strong players as much as possible (or even just look over the shoulder when they analyse their own games).

*Q: Hello Mr Yusupov, Some people learn chess late in life (30 years old and later), and don't have much time for training. Still, do you think there is some kind of regular exercise/practice that could help those players the most?*

A: The main problem for the players that learn chess late is that they are weak in tactics. So I would pay a lot of attention to tactical training/exercise.

*Q: Dear Mr Yusupov, I was quite interested in your response to Seth about trying to develop one's own strengths in the direction of a personal "hero". Do you have any thoughts to offer on how to do so? I guess one idea could be to work through a collection of their best games or even a book that is geared in this direction (e.g. "Learn from the Legends") – but I wonder how to ensure that I "do the work" (i.e. that I don't just passively play through the games / see all the answers spelt out in the commentary without trying to solve the problems and then comparing my solution to that of my hero). How do you typically approach that?*

A: I want to refer again to the first book by Mark and myself. The best way is to get the annotations of the players. Maybe play through their games and try to guess the moves. If there is a diagram, take a bit extra time to consider what to play, as probably there is an important moment. If you see something new, maybe write it down and start a collection of new ideas.

*Q: Dear Sir, I played a lot of blitz games and just finished my 2nd tournament in life. Have rating of 2040 in classic chess. On last tournament (90min+30sec) I played against players between 2200 and 2350 elo rating and played blitz. When they finished games on 15 sec to 15 min I had an hour and 15 min, in which is calculated my box of cigarettes that I smoked during the game. My result was 4,5 from 9 games and rating performance approx. 2250. I'm interested how to stop blitzing classic games, is there any formula? I just play the first moves that I see. Like to play chess that's described in Aagaard's Positional play, spot the weaknesses, develop less developed piece and then try to prevent opponents plans.*

A: Sit on your hands; maybe stir your coffee before you make a move or take a sip of water. You need to build a routine that stops you from making a move too quickly. You will still be quick, but you can at least check if you are blundering.

*Q: Dear Artur, as many have already done but also from my side a heartfelt Thank you for the books and all the work you have put into it. Apart from being helpful and down to the point I admire the fact that you also shy not away from presenting us your losses which makes your work paradoxically enough more pleasant. I have been working through the Tigersprung 1500 series (the "orange" books) and have started with the Tigersprung 1800 series, so I am surely no strong player (ELO about 1800). Although I am trying very hard to work concentrated on your course and to grasp the concepts presented, I still feel that as soon as I have finished one of your books, I could just pick them up and work through them again in order to work more in depth and to learn these examples by heart, although I do remember the main concepts of them. On the one hand it would probably make sense, but on the other hand one would also like to proceed with the books and learn more concepts, which is quite understandable as well I think. Would you therefore recommend to work through all your books in order to understand the lessons, or should one pick up your next book only as soon as he has learnt all the other examples almost by heart? Would you in the same sense also recommend re-reading few, but good books that really help in general and study them in depth or would you say that on my level it*



*is probably smarter to go for the other extreme and study many books in order to cover a bigger range and get familiar with different concepts? It is a bit hard to describe but I hope you can understand what I am trying to say... My second question of lesser importance is whether you would recommend learning games by heart. I am always amazed when grandmasters point out other games and say how they continued and I never know if they had just looked them up in a database or if they really have them in their memory. Again, thank you for your work.*

A: Again this is quite an individual thing. If you feel like re-reading a chapter to get a better understanding, it does not hurt to read it again. But re-reading the whole book sounds a bit overkill. On the other hand, a top 5 GM allegedly read Dvoretsky's Endgame University five times. I am not sure it makes sense to learn games by heart or the examples; it is much more important to learn certain ideas. The GMs pick it up on the way because they work a lot with chess, not because they try to memorize games to the end (though they do this with opening analysis).

*Q: Dear Mr Yusupov, I'm interested to buy your series of books from Quality Chess, what do you suggest to study first, all three Fundamentals, than Beyond and Mastery or some other order of studying?*

A: Yes! Get the books in hardcover from Quality Chess. They stay open unsupported. Look at the special offers section.

*Q: Hi there! :) Could you rate each of the top 5 players? Thanks!*

A: I am not sure what the question is. My favourite five players of all time: Steinitz, Botvinnik, Alekhine, Korchnoi and Keres – but this is too limiting of course. Missing out Lasker and Capablanca feels criminal. Not to speak of Spassky, Kasparov and Fischer. I am really happy that we have such an interesting match coming. Carlsen has the potential to be the biggest of them all. But if Anand is in top form, he definitely will be a formidable opponent. Think of the Kramnik match in 2008. He would be almost impossible to beat. It is the kind of challenge Carlsen needs to make the next step. And it could be a great match for chess; but we need Vishy in top form. My favourite five players of the moment: Carlsen, Anand, Kramnik, Aronian and maybe Caruana or Gelfand; it depends on how you look at it. Maybe Karjakin.

*Q: Mr Yusupov, what sort of ratings for opponents do you think would be most beneficial for an improving player (e.g. would a 2000 benefit from training with a 2200 more than say, a 2400?) and related to this question is a matter of coaching, do you think there is a disconnect between many improvers and their titled coaches, since many of these coaches improved quickly at a young age, and it seems there are very few titled players who started training as adults? –thanks*

A: A complicated question. I do not think there is a rule we can put down here. It is important that the coach has experience, in life and chess. The rating is less important. Try to find the missing part in your own chess. Probably it is more important to play tournaments where the rating difference is not so big.

*Q: Dear Mr Yusupov, Can you please add 3 more books to each of the series? Such book can be called a workbook at should be suited for each level. For each chapter you can set 12 exercises, just like in previous books. But you can group exercises only according to main theme, for example Tactics, but not according to sub-theme, for example double attack. I'm deeply convinced that we all are eagerly waiting for such supplement books to your excellent series. And guess what, it's not great*

*problem for you to select the positions, you have thousands of them in your cards. Last but not the least, proposed books will sell like they are for free :) :) :) I see it like this:*

1. *Workbook Tigersprung auf 1500 Band I-III :) # total of 792 exercises #:*
  - *tactics: 33 chapters – 12 exercise per chapter = 396;*
  - *calculation: 6 chapters – 12 exercise per chapter = 72;*
  - *strategy: 6 chapters – 12 exercise per chapter = 72;*
  - *positional play: 9 chapters – 12 exercise per chapter = 108;*
  - *endgame: 12 chapters – 12 exercise per chapter = 144;*
2. *Workbook Tigersprung auf 1800 Band I-III :) # total of 720 exercises #:*
  - *tactics: 24 chapters – 12 exercise per chapter = 288;*
  - *calculation: 6 chapters – 12 exercise per chapter = 72;*
  - *strategy: 6 chapters – 12 exercise per chapter = 72;*
  - *positional play: 12 chapters – 12 exercise per chapter = 144;*
  - *endgame: 12 chapters – 12 exercise per chapter = 144;*
3. *Workbook Tigersprung auf 2100 Band I-III :) # total of 720 exercises #:*
  - *tactics: 12 chapters – 12 exercise per chapter = 144;*
  - *calculation: 12 chapters – 12 exercise per chapter = 144;*
  - *strategy: 12 chapters – 12 exercise per chapter = 144;*
  - *positional play: 12 chapters – 12 exercise per chapter = 144;*
  - *endgame: 12 chapters – 12 exercise per chapter = 144;*

A: No, I am too tired! I want to read, not write. But thank you for your interest.

*Q: Dear Mr Yusupov, There is a lot of material available for one to improve one's skill. With old books like Judgement and planning, Endgame Strategy, Zurich 1953, subsequent books like your works with Dvoretsky like Attack and Defence, and the School of chess Excellence volumes, Kasparov's analysis of all the classic games, and even modern works like the Grandmaster preparation volumes there is the problem of too much information even with regard to improving ones game. Which books do you think a player should first use to improve his skill and for training? Especially in higher levels like 2400 and 2500. Thank you very much.*

A: It would be a crime if I did not mentioned Jacob Aagaard's books and of course Mark Dvoretsky's books. He has written great new books and one is already out in German, which will come later in English. Volokitin's trainer wrote a great book as well – with Volokitin as “co-author”. There are many high quality books; basically what we need are a lot of examples and maybe less explanation – though we need some.

*Q: I'm interested how to combine Yusupov books. With which to start, all fundamentals, than go to Beyond and after to Mastery or combine them? Which order? I was in book store today, and almost bought all of them, which they had, but didn't because want to get info with which series from 9 books to start. Thanks.*

A: Fundamentals first, then Beyond the Basics and finally Mastery. Follow the colours!

*Q: Dear Artur, First of all, thank you for your course! I finished 1.5 books from the orange parts and I definitely feel stronger thanks to them, I just wish I'd have more discipline! But I can fix that, I hope. I'd like to ask you a simple question about one particular opening variation, I hope it's OK. I'm playing the Petroff and I like it. It really seems like I get very nice equality on the board and if my*

*opponent play some passive moves, I get good chances for an advantage (this definitely surprised me). The only annoying part is when my opponents play Qe2 which happens more often than I'd like. Should I try to win those games or just shrug and accept that if white wants a draw there is little I can do about it? I'm around 1700 now, I know that my opponents and I make stupid mistakes often but with this Qe2 it just seems a bit depressing sometimes. Thanks!*

A: I always liked it when my opponents played Qe2 and I even managed to win some games with Black. Don't despair!

Thanks a lot for this. It was quite interesting to hear what the readers were thinking. Maybe we will do it again sometime. Thank you for these excellent questions. They were really very good.

Artur